

# *Facts About* **BIRTH CONTROL**



## *What is birth control?*

Birth control means using a certain method, medicine and/or device to prevent pregnancy.

## *How well does birth control work?*

How well birth control will work for you depends on the method you choose and if you use it the right way. Birth control methods like the pill, Depo-Provera shots, Norplant and the IUD work almost all the time (99 percent of the time or more) if used the right way.

Other methods like the diaphragm, condoms (rubbers) or sperm-killing foams and creams can work well but depend on you using them the right way every time you have sex. Natural family planning only works if both partners are willing to learn how to do it and to not have sex for up to half of each month.

Abstinence (not having sex) is the only way to prevent pregnancy that works 100 percent of the time. If you do not use any birth control, you have about an 85 percent chance of getting pregnant.

## *What choices do I have?*

The basic types of birth control are:

**ABSTINENCE** - Abstinence means deciding not to have sex and sticking with that decision.

**BARRIER** - Barrier methods make a "wall" that blocks sperm from entering a woman's uterus.

*Some examples:*

- **Diaphragm** - Cap shaped device put over the cervix each time you have sex;
- **Spermicides** - Foam, cream, jelly or film put in the vagina each time you have sex;
- **Condoms (Rubbers)** - Latex sheath worn by the

man each time you have sex.  
**HORMONAL** - Hormonal methods use medicines to stop the woman from making an egg that could be fertilized.

*Some examples:*

- **Pills** - Pills that you take by mouth once a day;
- **Depo-Provera Shots** — Shots that you take once every three months;
- **Norplant** - Tiny capsules put in your arm which prevent pregnancy for up to five years.

## **NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING**

The natural method requires that a woman check her body temperature, cervical mucus and calendar each day to predict when it is safe to have sex.

**IUD** - This small plastic object is placed in the uterus for a year or more and prevents pregnancy by not allowing an egg to implant itself in the uterus.

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## *Facts About Birth Control, cont.*

**STERILIZATION** - This is an operation which makes a woman permanently unable to have children in the future or, for a man, to father children in the future.

**Remember: You can always choose not to have sex. No matter what, no one has the right to force you to have sex if you do not want to. There are people who care about you and can help you if someone is trying to hurt you or make you have sex when you do not want to. Call the number at the bottom of this page to talk to someone in private.**

### *How do I know what is the best birth control choice for me?*

Many women use different birth control methods during their lives. What method you use depends on if you have any health problems, how your partner feels about birth control, any side effects and how easy it is to use, among other things.

There is no “perfect” birth control method. Each method can work and some methods work better than others. Before you decide, you need to know how each kind of birth control works, what the good points are for each one and what problems you might have. Each woman must decide for herself what will work best.

### *What do I do?*

*Get the facts.* Find out everything you need to know about the methods you might want to use.

*Talk to your partner about birth control.* Birth control works best when the man and the woman pick out the birth control method together. This is even more important if you pick a method that you use each time you have sex.

If he wants to have sex but does not want you to use birth control or does not want to wear a condom and you want him to, you need to talk more about why he feels this way *before* you have sex. You may feel funny or embarrassed

talking about sex and birth control. That’s normal. However, it is important that he understand why you do not want to have a baby now or that you do not want to get a disease like AIDS or other diseases you can get when you have sex.

*Pick out a birth control method you like and learn to use it the right way.*

*Plan ahead.* Be sure you have what you need before you have sex. For example, if you miss a pill, get some condoms to use.

### *What if I have problems?*

You have probably heard others talk about birth control or about problems they have had. The fact is that most teens and women do not have a lot of problems when they use birth control. It may take a little while to learn how to use it or for your body to get used to it. If you try one kind of birth control and do not like it, there are always other kinds to try. Don’t stop using birth control if you are having sex.

### *Where do I get birth control?*

You can get free or low cost birth control supplies or medicines in private at your county health department, at a public or private health clinic and other places. You can also buy condoms and spermicides (foams, creams and jelly) at drug or grocery stores.

### *What if I can’t afford birth control?*

Can you afford a baby right now? Using birth control will help you decide when or even if it is best for you to have a baby. Your county health department (and most public clinics) can help you get the birth control you need.

**FOR INFORMATION OR HELP  
CALL THE FAMILY HEALTH LINE  
AT 1-800-652-1385  
(FREE CALL)**